



ZERO BEAT

NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS



Looking west from the ridge

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SOTA Activation Report

This is a SOTA Activation report from Ray/KD8EQA, who activated Peak 8101 (in the Wet Mountains, west of Pueblo) with Chris/W0CNX on May 31st.

This was Chris/W0CNX and my second attempt at Peak 8108. On our first attempt (February 7th) we made it about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way up when high winds, snow, and steep terrain, taken together, made our ascent too dangerous to continue. This time, we did it! Heading up Mason Gulch Trail #1363 for the second time I enjoyed the familiarity of doing it again. Except this time the stream wasn't frozen.



SOTA Continued Page 2



Chris/W0CNX & Ray/KD8EQA



Field Day News! Page 6



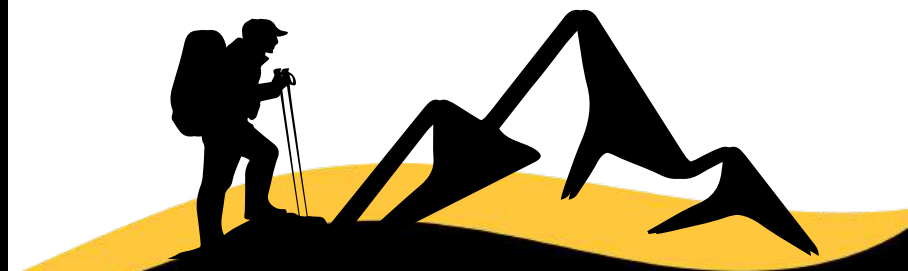
Mason Gulch Trail #1363

SOTA Report cont.

While hiking up the trail, we startled a bear about 70 feet ahead of us on the trail, which quickly ran, straight up the side of the gulch to safer ground. The bear was a beautiful light/medium brown color, and it was the first time I'd ever seen a bear in the wild. We left the trail at the same waypoint that we used in February, but this time, everything looked different. All the trees and scrub oak had leaves, and what looked open in February now looked dense and made route finding difficult.

We eventually made our way up through the scrub oak to the ridge. From the ridge we could see two sub-peaks between us and the summit. Everything on the windward side of the ridge (that we just hiked up) was covered with scrub oak, and everything on the leeward side was steep, and covered with nasty deadfall. Knowing how much fun the scrub oak was, we decided to try climbing over the dead fall, and headed up the left side of the ridge. Because the terrain we were crossing was so steep, and the deadfall so plentiful, it was slow going.

South Hardscrabble Creek



Continued Page 3



SOTA Report cont.

When it was 11:00am ... the Alert time we had given our friends in PPRAA and the Pueblo ARC ... I got on 146.52 MHz, letting anyone who was monitoring the frequency for our activation know that it would be at least another hour before we'd be on the summit. After getting past both sub-peaks Chris hiked up to the top of the ridge we were following, and learned that it was easier to fight through the scrub oak on level ground than to climb over deadfall on the steep mountainside. We continued up the ridge to the summit, which provided us with a nice stand of fir trees to Activate in.



Checking my GPS



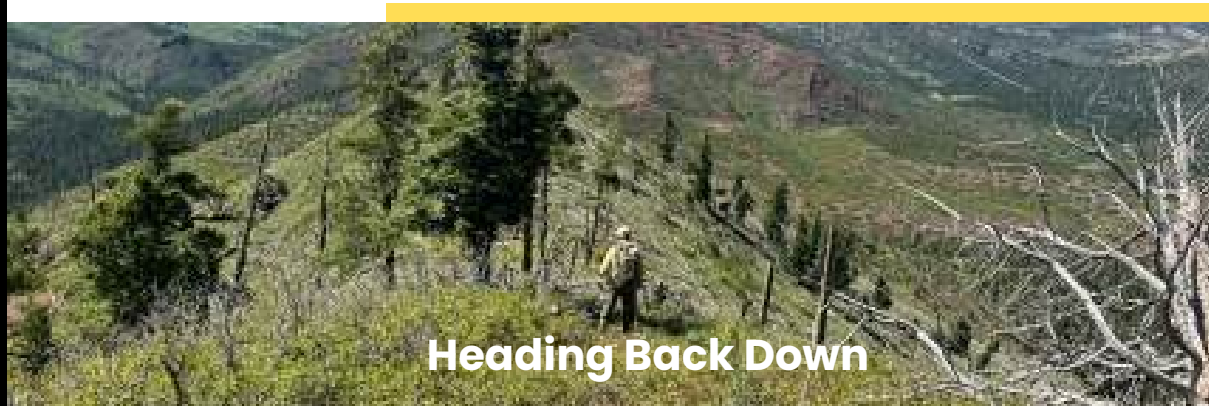
Heading up through the scrub oak

We also had a nice open view toward Pikes Peak, Colorado Springs, and Pueblo. Assembling our handheld Yagi antennas, it was now time to play radio! Starting on 146.52 MHz, Chris and I made 20 great contacts! Then, switching to 145.67 MHz, we got three more Qs using the D-STAR national calling frequency. Many thanks to the chasers who patiently waited and monitored 146.52 MHz an extra 2 hours for us to get on the air!

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Callsigns included K9EAJ, AI0RC, AA0L, AE5OQ, and K0TER, who were all working on a tower/antenna project for K0TER. Other PPRAA callsigns included KF0RIG, WA0KXO, N0ABC, KJ0CFW, KC0EL, KD7NMO, and possibly KC0PPK. Additionally, KJ0CFW, K9EAJ, and KF0RIG were our D-STAR contacts. We also worked K9PVM, who was on Pikes Peak, visiting from Illinois. We could see Pikes Peak from our summit and saw a lot of clouds overhead. He told us it was snowing.

At the high point of the summit, we found a cairn, holding a badly damaged register and plastic container. The register suffered so much water damage that nothing was readable. Fortunately, we brought a new register and container with us that we used to replace the old one. Our first entry in the new register was our tribute to those who came before us, signing the original register. During our descent down from the ridge Chris stepped on some loose rocks and stirred up a rattlesnake, which wasn't happy, but slithered back into hiding. Then, returning on the Mason Gulch trail, we took a short break, and Chris soaked his sore feet in the stream. Further down the trail I startled several elk, which ran straight up the side of the gulch like it was no big deal. And then just before we got back to the car, it started to drizzle... it actually felt nice.



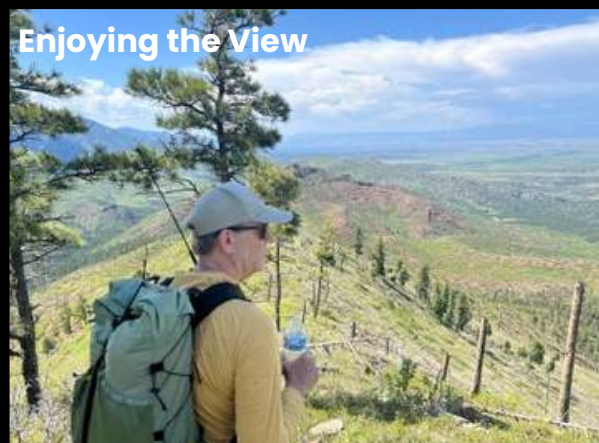
Heading Back Down

SOTA Report cont.

It was quite a day; nine total hours of hiking, two hours of activating, and some wildlife surprises. It was also very rewarding to have finally activated a previously unactivated SOTA peak. Thanks again to the chasers who made our day so much fun!



Enjoying the View



FREE Radio Licensing Test Sessions
Second Saturday of every month
Testing begins at 10 am
Please arrive by 9:30 am
to get signed in and get instructions.
Location: Pikes Peak Regional
Office of Emergency Management
3755 Mark Dabling Blvd.
Colorado Springs, CO 80907
ve@ppraa.org

Not the Same Old Field Day!

If you rolled up to PPRAA's field day at Mountain View Electric Association on Friday, June 27, to help with setup or visited any time during Field Day weekend, you might have thought it was the same old setup we've used for the past few years. Ken/K0KWH and LD/W0XLD provided their RVs and radios for the voice and digital stations respectively, and David/AD0QD and Tom/W0TBT taught the radio merit badge on Saturday in their shelter. Doug/N7LEM and his family kept food flowing to the operators and participants for Saturday lunch, dinner, and Sunday breakfast. Hopefully the familiar sights and food were a welcome comfort.





Field Day 2025

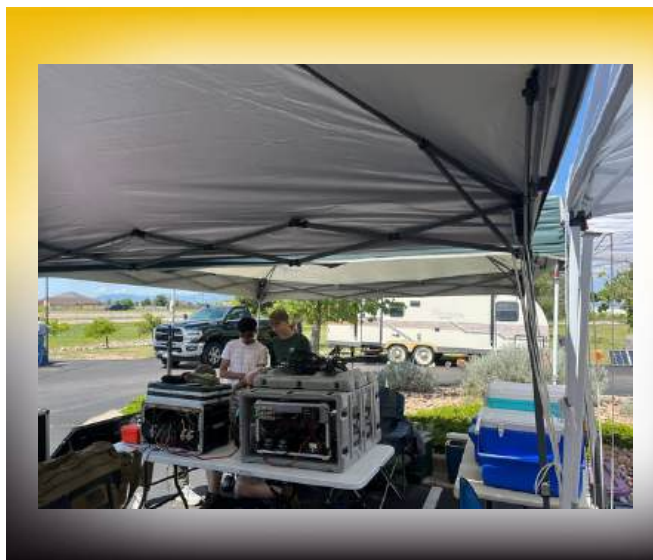
But to get on the air, you'd have to interact with new experiments. Ken's voice station used an end-fed halfwave antenna provided by Ben/AB2SG, and Ben said his design goal for the antenna was to keep as much wire more than 30 feet above ground as possible. To that end, he installed two mast systems and ran low-loss feedline coax all the way up the first mast to keep the feed point well above ground. The results were excellent, with nice clear audio on Ken's radio throughout the weekend. Ben also established a fiber network and provided laptops for logging at all stations.



LD provided a digital station both in the computer-based sense and the finger-based sense: it was used for JS8Call, FT8, and FT4, but also hosted our star CW operator, Jim/K3ILC, who racked up points on the iambic paddles all Saturday night and into the morning on Sunday. LD experimented with an antenna on the roof of his camper comprising two screwdriver antennas, one in vertical orientation and one horizontal acting as a tuned ground plane.

It was hoped that the extremely narrow bandwidth of this dual-coil configuration would minimize interference to voice stations on the same band, but in practice the dits and dahs still bled into the voice stations, so coordination was still necessary to ensure they used different bands. Perhaps the narrow-bandwidth antenna acting as a sharp bandpass filter would be more effective if the other stations also used very narrow-bandwidth antennas, but that is an experiment for another time.

Ray/AA0L brought his camper this year, and it housed both the VHF station and the Get-On-The-Air station (GOTA). We had some successful contacts by GOTA operators using a Hustler BTV vertical antenna, but a new feature was Myron/KL7YY working the 6-meter band with a Moxon antenna. The band cooperated, and Myron got several 6-meter contacts in our log from at least one skip off the ionosphere. He also brought an Icom IC-9700 to see if he could work a satellite using an omnidirectional "egg-beater" antenna on the 2-meter band and one on the 70-centimeter band.



Contact Zero Beat

Do you have photos of PPRAA events you'd like to share, or news from the ham radio world that the club might like to hear? Please email zerobeat@ppraa.org to share your ideas and pictures.



Field Day 2025

We'd heard the rumor that astronauts on the International Space Station would be participating in field day, so Ray woke up in the wee hours of the morning on Sunday to see if he could track an ISS pass, but he heard nothing. Myron tried again on a pass after sunrise, and although he did not hear any astronauts, he was able to hear his own voice being relayed by the ISS's repeater. Although that does not count as a contact for field day points, it still proved that our tracking software was correct, the antennas worked, and the 9700's full-duplex and doppler-shifting features were configured correctly. Also, it gave us confidence that the ISS repeater was online as well.

With 180 contacts on the voice station, 140 on CW, and 225 on other digital modes, we had a total of 545 contacts on the main stations, plus 15 contacts on the GOTA station. We reached every state except for Delaware, including Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and the US Virgin Islands, five provinces of Canada, and DX stations in Cayman Islands, England, Italy, and Japan.





Field Day 2025

When Mother Nature sent a small thunderstorm cell flying through the site on Saturday afternoon, we stayed safe by disconnecting feedlines for an hour or so, but the wind threatened to carry off the canopies, food, and handouts. Field day participants stowed the loose articles and grabbed onto the canopies, and the storm moved past quickly. Fortunately, this proved that all the antenna mounting strategies were effective and safe, and there was no damage to the station equipment.

Thanks to all the volunteers who made Field Day a success, to the operators who racked up points, to the cooks, training facilitators, ambassadors for the club, and friendly faces who made it another fun event for PPRAA members and guests. Though we had some familiar components, we had a lot of success trying new antennas and capabilities this year, and such experimentation, new components, and friendship are what Field Day is all about.



JULY 2025

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PPRAA Annual Club Picnic and Car Show

**SATURDAY
AUGUST 17, 2024
10 AM TO 4 PM
FOOD SERVED AT 12:30 PM**

**FOUNTAIN CREEK REGIONAL PARK
2010 DUCKWOOD RD.
FOUNTAIN, CO 80817
PAVILION #3**

**CLUB WILL PROVIDE BURGERS, BRATS, CHIPS & DRINKS
PLEASE BRING A SIDE DISH OR DESSERT TO SHARE**



CAR SHOW CATEGORIES

**GRAND PRIZE: CLEANEST INSTALL
MOST SIMULTANEOUS BANDS AND MODES
MOST UNIQUE VEHICLE**

**MOST EXPENSIVE VEHICLE WITH
A HOLE DRILLED IN IT FOR AN ANTENNA**

CAR SHOW ENTRANTS PLEASE ARRIVE BY 10 AM



**General Membership meeting (13 AUG 2025)
will be both in-person and virtual**

Location: Golden Corral
1970 Waynoka Rd, Colorado Springs

The business meeting starts at 7 PM, but you may get your dinner and beverage of choice and check in any time after 6 PM for a social hour. Club members check your email for info or email Officers@PPRAA.org to receive the Zoom information.

**NOTICE! September 10 Meeting will be at
King Buffet – 801 N. Academy Blvd.**

PPRAA Club Picnic and Car Show
Aug 23, 2025
See Page

and Watch PPRAA.org for more information.

PPRAA Megafest 2025 Cancelled

Due to a compilation of circumstances the PPRAA
Board of Directors has reluctantly decided to
cancel MegaFest for 2025.